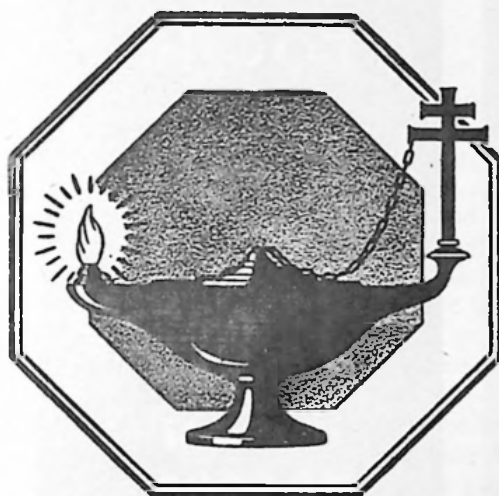


TOC H JOURNAL



MAY—MCMXLV

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. 'WHEN WE GO HOME,' by F.A.G.	67
II. 'WHEN THEY COME HOME,' by B.B.	68
YOUNG WORLD—IV. The Youth Service Committee . . .	71
TOC H IN ARAKAN, by John Callf	73

PUBLISHED BY TOC H FROM ITS HEADQUARTERS, AT
FORTY-SEVEN, FRANCIS STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1

THREEPENCE



*Top left: Cocanada Services Club. Right: Talbot House, Vizagapatam.
 Middle left: Jemadar Siri Ram, Warden of Vizagapatam.
 Middle right: Subedar Sitaramswanii, Warden of Vizagapatam Transit Camp Club.
 Bottom left: The Reading Room, Vizagapatam. Right: An impromptu concert in the Music Room.*

TOC H JOURNAL

VOL. XXIII

MAY, 1945

No. 5

I. 'WHEN WE GO HOME'

The Serviceman's View

Apart from the job that keeps him busy, the Service man's working thoughts are mostly busy with going home—on leave or, better still, altogether—at the earliest moment after the job is done. Here is a well-reasoned view of it which appeared in September last year over the initials 'F.A.G.' in Light on the Rock, the excellent magazine of Toc H Gibraltar.

WHEN the great moment comes to unpack that pre-war civvy suit from the wardrobe where it has hung for so long in an aura of moth balls, a pathetic symbol of civilian life you left behind, and having donned it, you thrust out your chest in pleasure and pride at the freedom you have at last regained, don't be too surprised if a button here or a seam there should give out. It is more than likely that the clothes which have remained untenanted for so long will not fit as snugly as of yore. Service life will probably have altered you physically, particularly if you had followed a sedentary occupation in pre-war days, and you will not re-assume the garments of peace time as gracefully as you expect.

And that may well go for things other than clothes—for lots of every-day things which fitted snugly into the pattern of your life before the war snatched you from them—or them from you.

Many men went into the Forces and have remained in them as misfits. Isn't there a danger, also, that some who may have fitted well into the rigorous dimensions of active service may return to civilian life and find themselves misfits in a world which has become a stranger to them?

That is why, at this stage of the war, we need to guard against slack thinking on the subject of our ultimate return to "Civvy Street" and all that it means in details to which we have become unaccustomed, relationships of which we have been long

deprived, and points of social etiquette and behaviour now almost unfamiliar. Memory has painted some things in true and lasting colours while others have been sketched in all too lightly. The snags and the irritants of "Civvy" days are obscured by memory's shading processes and the pleasant features catch the high lights of conscious recognition. We need to be prepared to accept some disillusionment without becoming disillusioned people and to live gratefully for the rediscoveries of the goodness of family life and citizenship.

In the years preceding the war, far too many folk had become blasé. If it had done nothing else that is good, the war has certainly bumped much of that out of us. We shall need to re-enter civilian life with a spirit of adventure and a freshness of vision backed by a faith that can conquer all the subtle onslaughts of cynicism. For there will be much to confuse us, to disappoint us, and to provoke anger in us, just as there will be much to enlighten us and encourage and comfort us. If we expect one side of the picture without the other, we are the worst kind of fool, and there is little hope for us. We shall be what we deserve to be, misfits. Most of all there will be great demands on our energy and persistence, that we may build a brave new world before the vision fades.

The return to civilian post-war life is not merely what fond imagination would lead us to believe—the re-entering of our own par-

ticular living room where arms wait to embrace us and children's eyes lift wonderingly to welcome us. Sentiment has not lied in painting such a picture, but it has failed to remind us that on the large canvas of life the living room is a ruin—a shattered, blasted shell—and there is no security for the family of man, no freedom from the fear which haunts the eyes of children of man till he has begun to build bravely to a plan which precludes all future danger of the forces of evil being unleashed upon the women and children, the weak and infirm, using withal, materials that endure not only the onslaught from without, but the dry-rot from within.

Somewhere between the purely personal picture that exists in your mind and in mine of an intimate, happy homecoming and the wider picture of permanent security and world peace in our time, there is a job that is bigger than anything the war has set us. And it must be done. The blood and sweat and tears of the past five years have written in

letters of indelible sacrifice a challenge which refuses to be silenced with the closing of a chapter in the world's history—a challenge which must become the theme of the ensuing chapters. Evidence abounds everywhere that this is indeed 'A Time for Greatness' and the need will not diminish because the guns fall silent and the physical hazards are reduced.

The measure of our individual greatness will be the manner in which each of us can lay aside the weapons and arguments of war and take up the tools of peace to build by faith, thought and humble craftsmanship in our own circle of influence a job that is nearer to the Mind of the Master Builder than anything we have done before.

It is too early for specific foreknowledge of our task in a brave new world, it is not too early to prepare ourselves to seize the great opportunity which is surely coming to us. Toc H men, look to your Compass!

F.A.G.

II. 'WHEN THEY COME HOME'

What Toc H can do

THOUSANDS of towns, villages, families and friends are waiting eagerly to welcome Service men and women when, at last, they come home. There will be flags and cheering, civic receptions, family parties; rations will be stretched to the limit, all the beer obtainable will be drunk. All that won't last long. And what next? About that ideas are usually hazier. If we are to judge by last time (though we hope we have learnt since then) very little may be done.

Has Toc H a part to play in the return of the Services to 'civvy street'? Many units believe it has, some are making their plans. Take one instance—Bristol. Reg Staton, himself a repatriated prisoner of war, now Pilot of the Bristol Mark, was naturally much concerned to get anything done that he could for other repatriated prisoners. This led him, and those working with him, on to the wider ground of the returning Service men and women of all kinds.

It was clear to them at once that Toc H had neither the forces nor the right to tackle this problem alone—it must be a combined effort of all the societies and organisations which work for the citizen, young and old; the Churches and some Government departments must be 'in on it' too. But Toc H could at least take the first step (as it has often done in other cases) by providing a meeting-ground and stating the problem at the outset. Once something was set going, Toc H could drop into its proper place in the whole scheme. It could give the first push; it didn't seek the credit for the result.

Reg Staton, aided and abetted by his allies, therefore summoned a meeting at the Bristol Mark at the end of October. To this were invited representatives of bodies like the Council of Social Service, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, the Council for the Disabled, the Red Cross, the British Legion, the Prisoners of War Relatives' Association, the Sailors'

societies, various Youth organisations, not to forget the Ministry of Labour.

What Toc H offers

With the invitation went out quotations from a letter to Reg from the Toc H member who had been asked to speak at this inaugural meeting: it put the part of Toc H thus:—

"I assume that Toc H will be privileged to be a partner in the Bristol venture. What has it to offer as its contribution to the returning Service man—P.O.W. or otherwise? You know what it has offered to many thousands of Service men and women during the war. It is the same thing that it has tried to offer to men since its first day in Flanders in 1915. It is the same thing that it will go on offering to men—ex-Service men as much as any other—in the time now coming. As you know very well, we have often tried to sum up the job of Toc H in two words—'Fellowship,' 'Service'—with the essential adjective 'Christian' in front of each. Actually we believe in Toc H that Fellowship and Service are not two things but two aspects of the same thing, and that one without the other just makes nonsense.

I need not embroider this old theme. How does it fit the returning Service man? Some thousands—we can't guess how many—have met Toc H during their service at home, in the Desert, in Italy, Malta, India, Iceland, on the Western Front, in the ports of the world—where you will. Many hundreds—we don't yet know how many—have been attracted by what they have seen of Toc H and want to go on playing their part in it in peace-time. What they liked about it first was the fellowship; Toc H was a friendly club to go to, people there had time for them and treated them as friends, not merely as customers. And quite a lot of these Service visitors caught the second idea—they wanted to do jobs for other people alongside Toc H, and have done many, under Service conditions.

Now, I don't think we have anything else to offer the ex-Service men and women, but I don't fancy anyone can offer anything that matters more for real living.

First of all, *friendship*, regardless of a man's circumstances or opinions. Lots of men will need that, especially when they find 'post-war' not panning out quite as they had hoped. And, secondly, what comes out of friendship and is accomplished by friends together—*service*. We all know that most men in the Services have been thinking a lot about the future, the 'new world' that is so much talked about, in which they and their families will have to live. Many men have been discussing all this quite seriously with each other and want to have some hand in shaping this 'new world' for themselves. How can they make a start in perhaps a small way? I believe that Toc H offers one channel to the ordinary (or extraordinary) man to put his ideas into practice.

So, first let us offer him our friendship—an entry into the 'family spirit' of Toc H. And

then the chance, if he likes, to throw his weight into work for the 'new world' alongside us."

The Team starts Recruiting

The preliminary meeting at Mark IX was well attended, and everyone agreed that there was an urgent case for going ahead with plans to be of service to Bristol Service men and women on demobilisation. The 'team,' thus formed, has met at intervals since and, although the difficulties of building up a service of friendship which would operate in all parts of the city, seemed at first to be insurmountable, something definite is now emerging. A special meeting of clergy and ministers has lately been held in the Mark, for there is a big part waiting for church congregations and organisations to play, if they are alive to it: they can, if they will, add the adjective 'Christian' to this work.

Another very hopeful source of power is being exploited. It is thus described in the *Western Area News Letter* for January:

"It is hoped that the local Civil Defence wardens, who through the war have come to know the joy of both fellowship and self-sacrificing service, will continue on a voluntary basis and become, so to speak, 'Civic Wardens,' extending their friendship and help, acting as real 'neighbours,' to all those men and women who have been away from home during the war. The Wardens, who have already proved the quality of their friendship to most families in war-time, will be ready and able to advise men and women in need of information where this may best be found.

This Wardens' Service would be 'standing by,' when all the flag-waving is done, ready to work for and with those who have been serving in the Forces. Their real welcome and expression of gratitude to Service men and women will lie in their willing friendship, their readiness to do everything to help. As examples, seeing a nervous man or woman through the first interview with the Ministry of Labour, helping to fill up forms and answer questions; accompanying a diffident person in an application for help and advice to a particular Social Service organisation, or approaching the Housing Committee on behalf of those looking for accommodation, etc.

Already the 500 Wardens of the Central Division are taking up the idea, and it is hoped to extend recruiting to the 5,000 wardens of the whole Bristol area.

'With' rather than 'For'

The note in the *News Sheet* then takes the matter an important stage further. This

effort is to be thought of not merely as 'welfare work' but as a school of true citizenship. This point should come home forcibly to Toc H itself, which through its War Service work is widely misinterpreted by the general public as just one more 'welfare' society—and indeed runs a big risk in some places of actually becoming no more than that. The note goes on:

"The Team is most anxious to work *with*, as well as *for*, those returning home—to incorporate Service men and women into work of various kinds, whereby the traditions of fellowship and service, built up in the Forces, may be maintained and carried into civil life. Through such fellowship and service the Team visualises great possibilities of establishing the right kind of community centres and 'neighbourhood' schemes, catering for the widest welfare of the districts in which they can be set up. It is realised that there will be many with no wish to serve: there are always 'two kinds of willing people—those willing to help others, and those willing to let them.' But it is felt that there will be quite a large number only too anxious to do all they can and only needing direction. This has already been made apparent by repatriated prisoners of war, most of whom have demanded to be given some means of serving other people."

Changed People

In facing the whole problem of demobilisation and the re-settlement of our country for peace, two points need especially to be continually in our minds. First, many thousands of the men returning will have been long away from home, five years in a prison camp or equally long in the exile of service in Africa, and the Middle or the Far East. They have had experiences we at home can only share by hearsay; in the case of prisoners of war they have had, however cramped the conditions, a leisure denied to us, time to think and grow. We must expect them, in varying degrees, to return to us changed in body and mind. The change will probably turn out to be greater than we can guess at first sight; we should not minimise it. At the same time we must not exaggerate it, as some people have been woefully doing by assuming that most prisoners of war would return physically wrecked and mentally unbalanced—a sore travesty of the facts as many of us now know them.

At the same time, we at home have had *our* experiences, scarcely less searching—bombing, blackout, rationing, shortages and exhaustion. It follows that we who look anxiously at the men and women who return, must not forget that we, too, have undergone change. Of both parties, then, the old Latin tag is likely to be true—"the times change and we change with them." It is to be a 'changed' world (for better or for worse?) because it is full of changed people. All sorts of little everyday personal adjustments will be needed as we settle down together to rebuild out of the ruins of the past. We can face this without fear.

Not so much 'Ex'

Secondly, the tendency to think of the Service man and woman as separate and somehow different from ourselves, to lay schemes for him or her as a class to be called 'ex-Service,' seems to many of us (to the Bristol 'team,' for instance) to be thoroughly pernicious. Large numbers of men and women may be needed in the Services for a long time to come, but the vast majority now serving will soon exchange a temporary 'fancy dress' for normal 'civvies.' The sailor, soldier or airman always remains a citizen and most of them will soon be exercising the day to day rights and duties of civilian citizens. Old comradeships of active service, sealed in years of boredom, endeavour and danger, will not be forgotten—they are not meant to be. 'Reunions' will recur as long as life lasts, but let us keep clear of too much 'ex-Service' or 'ex-P.O.W.' this and that. The members of the regimental associations, the Home Guard or Civil Defence clubs of old comrades can play a much bigger part than merely keeping alive the memories of old times: they can be builders, second to none, of the new times, bringing to the life of the community their proven gifts of comradeship and the spirit of service, still ready for sacrifice in an unselfish cause.

Surely Toc H comes in all along the line. Its first concern must be to *be* itself. What it ought to *do* will be shown to it and will follow.

B.B.

YOUNG WORLD—IV. The Youth Service Committee

Last year a Youth Service Committee was appointed by the Central Executive, with J. R. BROWN, one of its members, as Chairman and ALEC CHURCHER as its full-time Secretary. During the year it has done much work, in conjunction with the Areas and units of Toc H and youth organisations of all kinds. It has taken over the work of the old Schools Section among boys in Public and Secondary schools; it has made active international contacts (e.g., with the Polish, Czechoslovak and Turkish Youth organisations); it ran, in co-operation with the American Office of War Information, the 'Young America' Exhibition in London; in collaboration with five other national youth organisations, it has groups of Service men and women interested in youth leadership in 44 Toc H Services Clubs at home and overseas and provided them with a series of discussion notes ('Springboards'); and experimented in various other directions. In all its work Toc H and the Women's Section are equal partners. Many members feel that there is no field greater than this for Toc H service in the future. The general principles of it are suggested in a report the Committee has now produced. We print them here, and hope later to return to this work in more detail.

PART One of the Report reads as follows:—

1. Broadly speaking we have regarded our job as the stimulation of a two-way traffic—of men and women from and through Toc H into the service of youth, and of boys and girls from schools and youth organisations into the field of Christian community service, whether through membership of Toc H or not.

At the end of a year's work, these are the impressions that stand out:

- (a) Youth service is likely to be especially important in the years ahead, and one of the best ways of serving youth may be to give it opportunities to serve.
- (b) Pressure to develop the service of youth may strain the supply of adequate leaders.
- (c) The work may become over-secularised. Toc H must help to contribute Christian leadership.
- (d) The work may become professionalised to a much greater extent than previously, but the main part of Toc H's contribution must continue to take the form of part-time voluntary service, which we consider will remain an essential feature of youth work.
- (e) The contribution which Toc H can make should be planned on a long-term policy.

2. These points would amplify as follows:

- (a) Nobody can yet estimate the effects of the war upon the young, but everybody knows of parted families, lost discipline, over-strain, under-nourishment, scamped and interrupted education, emphases on false values and passing glammers, the malaise of restlessness. These are not only British problems; they are world problems. That the field be seen whole and integral, especially by those who are ploughing a small corner of it, is essential. Contacts, as and when possible, with youth leaders of other nations, and between young people of this and other countries will be of first importance. The generation that was too young for the war must be given a sense of belonging, and welcomed as full partners with those who will be returning. They must be made not only to feel that their opinions are wanted, but shown that their help is needed.
- (b) Clearly much will depend upon the quality of youth leadership. There may be a tendency to assume qualifications and to be impatient of apprenticeship. Wise training (which means the encouragement of a standard without the infliction of standardisation) will be of great impor-

tance, though no amount of training will make a leader out of someone with no natural aptitude for leadership.

- (c) If, as seems certain, the State is contemplating new responsibilities through wider and longer education, increased financial aid to youth organisations, provision of community and youth centres, and possibly pre-military training and conscription for some kind of national service, the influence exercised by youth leaders may become largely secularised as well as increasingly professionalised. The authorities concerned are by no means unaware of these dangers, and to those who are responsible for youth organisations they are obvious.
- (d) The gulf between organised religion and large sections of the boy and girl population has widened alarmingly.

The churches and most of the national voluntary organisations are aware of it and there are welcome indications that they are getting together to try and find the right religious approach to boys and girls who have little or no previous touch with any religious influence.

- (e) What then should be the aim of Toc H in this field? Not, as we see it, to engage in any kind of "Toc H Youth Work," nor to express approval or disapproval of this or that method; but to study all developments, to encourage contacts and develop co-operation in order to be ready, so far as we may, to inspire members of Toc H to undertake part-time work for youth through existing youth organisations as an expression of Christian conviction.

TESTIMONIAL AND CHALLENGE

Before Alan Cowling, our Commissioner in S.E.A.C., left India for leave at home he received the following letter from Lieut. General Sir OLIVER LEESE, Commanding the 14th Army:

DEAR MR. COWLING,

I am very glad to know that you are going home to get more help for the work of Toc H in this theatre. I hope you will be very successful.

The work which the Philanthropic Bodies are doing here is beyond praise, its scope is almost unlimited, and it is only the shortage of personnel which at present prevents an extension which we all greatly desire.

From the first, Toc H has been distinguished by the pioneering enterprise of its war organisation in India and in Burma. Its most valuable work is the provision of mobile teams with troops in the field. These teams, which form a centre round which all amenities in the most forward areas are grouped, are doing splendid work in Burma now. We need as many more of them as you can provide.

Hostels and Clubs are other branches of your work which are invaluable to us here. We have asked you to undertake a big programme of development in these directions. Here again, you can only help us if suitable men and women will come forward to do this valuable work for our soldiers.

Philanthropic bodies make a contribution to the welfare of troops in the field which could not be provided in any other way. By personal con-

tact you bring to our men the spirit of your organisation and a message from their people at Home.

I hope that while you are at Home you will make widely known the value we place on the work of Toc H. As a result I trust you will find many men and women who want to play their part with Toc H in the great service it is rendering to our troops in this theatre.

Yours very sincerely,

OLIVER LEESE,

*Commander, Allied Land Forces,
South East Asia.*

From this it should be obvious to every reader that the need for more men for Toc H work in the Far Eastern theatre of war is urgent and likely to continue long after the war in Europe is over. The work demands the best men we can find. They must not only be physically fit but have character and initiative. 'Died in-the-wool' Toc H members are especially valuable, but any man who shares our ideals, as experience in the field has proved, is eligible. Application should be made to the Hon. Administrator, Toc H Headquarters, 47, Francis Street, London, S.W.1., at the earliest possible opportunity.

TOC H IN ARAKAN

JOHN CALLF (*Deputy Commissioner*), who is in charge of Toc H, S.E.A.C., while the Commissioner, Alan Cowling, is home on leave, wrote a lively account of his visit in January to the Arakan coast of Burma, which here follows. Some of this news has already appeared in letters from the men concerned—Arthur Servante on Maungdaw (with pictures) and his move with the Division (in the March JOURNAL); Bill Eley on work in one I.M.F.T.U. (in February), and Taffy Davies on getting going in another (in March). But John Callf gives us an all-round picture, which we believe our readers will be glad to have.

IT is nearly two years since I went down that way before, and right from the time I left Chittagong the difference in temperature of the morale of everyone was most remarkable. In the days of 1942 it was rather a case of 'backs to the wall' against the advancing Jap, with very little in the way of men or equipment with which to keep the door shut. This time, however, one could almost sniff the atmosphere of confidence in the air, and there was much humour mixed in with it . . .

On the road down I travelled with a Squadron Leader in his jeep. He is known everywhere as 'Jehu,' for a very obvious reason, and, the road surface being what it is I was distinctly airborne for at least fifty per cent. of the journey! He chose to ignore a very prominent sign on the roadside which said: 'Go slow and see the country; go fast and see the Brigadier,' and bucketed along until we pulled up for breakfast at a staging camp forty miles down the road. Here lived a man who was not in love with the monotonous landscape of paddy fields, for the name of his house was 'Dim View.'

West Africa at Chiringa

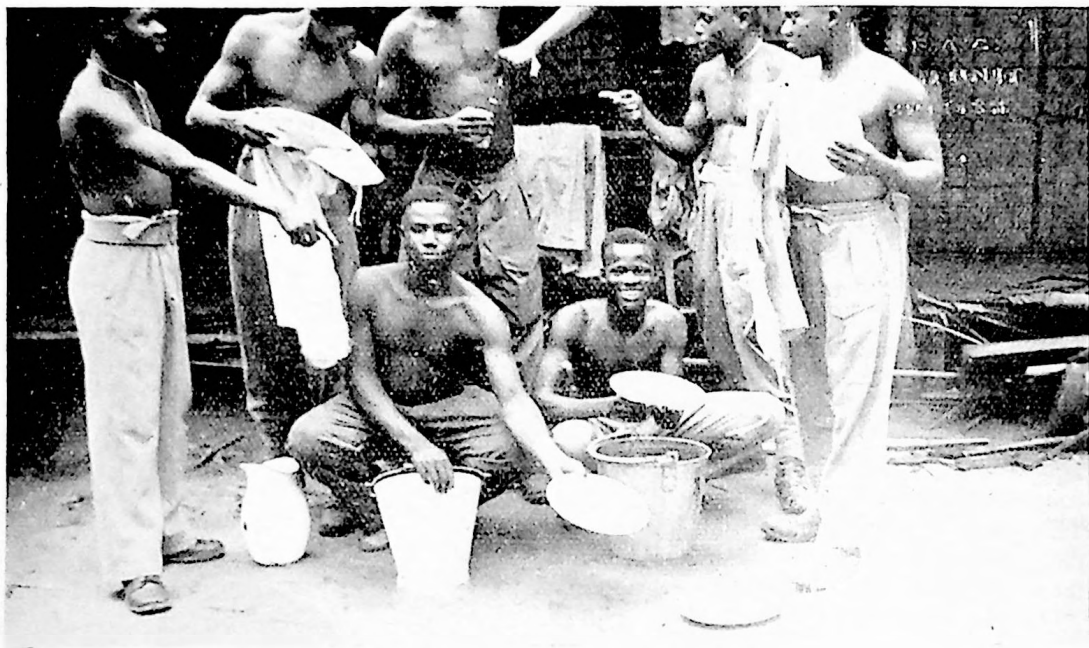
Then on down to Chiringa, where the first Toc H Club is situated. Built of the inevitable bamboo, it is a roaring centre for both British troops and West African. The British troops' canteen is doing a fine job, and many a convoy has been glad to pull up and wet the Arakan dust that hangs like a fog wherever there is traffic. There is a huge *basha*, which is given over entirely to programme work. Something is arranged for every night of the week, and during the day-time it serves as a lounge and rest room. It is a great delight to see so comfortable a place, complete with easy chairs, where once

was jungle, and visitors in the early days could be pardoned for stepping out again hastily under the impression that they had walked into an Officers' Mess by mistake! There is a library, of course, and a writing room that is never empty.



West Africa on Duty.

It is the West Africans' canteen, though, which startles the newcomer. Go in there at any time of the day and you will find the huge *basha* bung full of men who are doing one of three things in a mighty way—eating, talking or laughing: some combine all three!



West Africa off duty—Washing-up for Tea II

The West African's conception of a sandwich is a loaf parted down the middle, and a dish of tea comes best in half-gallon measures. He has some tastes that are peculiarly his own—Brylcreem sandwiches, for instance, whenever he can lay hands on a bottle. Then there was the time when we laid in a few dozen bottles of eucalyptus oil against the coming cold weather and its crop of colds. All were sold within the hour, and the *basha* shimmered in an aura of eucalyptus fumes. They had drunk the lot, and according to general opinion it was very good too. Standing in front of any of the satisfied customers could be likened only to confronting a flame-thrower! Doris Lechler and Stanley Garmant struggle gallantly to cope with these Gargantuan appetites, and have succeeded to an extent that deserves great praise. Alongside the canteen is a theatre for the West Africans, which will just complete the picture.

These West Africans are grand fellows, well liked by our own British lads for their abounding cheerfulness and their ability to extract uproarious amusement from the

smallest incidents of their daily life. Leaving Chiringa on the way South we were driven by such a one. The sight of an M.P. on a motor cycle following behind us produced all the excitement of the chase, and as we rounded bend after bend of the jungle road our driver would look back and give us the state of the game.

"I no see um now. Mebbe him gone for chop" . . . and then a roar of delight—"Him coming" . . . ending on a note of regret when he reported that the M.P. had pulled up on the roadside and had evidently decided that we were not fair game.

And so we travelled through the jungle foothills until we came into the broad valley of the Naaf River. This has been the scene of a shifting battle that has gone on ever since the middle of 1942. Bawli Bazaar, once an outpost, is now, happily, a back area, and it was not until we reached Razabil at the end of the track that we could see any real sign of the bitter fight that was waged before the Japs were flung back into the mountain jungle.

On the way down I met a very old friend of mine, a Mauloi from one of the villages at

the beginning of the Ngakedauk Pass. In 1942 he had helped to provide me with spies who went over the Mayu Range regularly to keep an eye on Japanese movements, and there he was, still living in the same house and very keen to know all the news of the old battalion. He was very contemptuous of the enemy opposition, and said that we could leave them to rot in the hills while we walked past them to Akyab. How right he was!

Maungdaw—and a Piano

In Maungdaw Arthur Servante was running the Toc H Club, which was never shut throughout the monsoon, even in the days when the Jap came to within six or seven miles and from evening 'stand-to' until morning 'stand-down' no one could be allowed to use its comfort. The Club was once the Maungdaw Courthouse, quite the best building in the place, and has to my certain knowledge changed hands seven times in the course of the war . . . Always in sight of the Jap O.P's, Maungdaw Toc H Club was a much-loved place, and it is a great tribute to Arthur Servante that when the Division moved forward they insisted that he went with them.

Colin Bull has arrived in Maungdaw to carry on the good work of the House.

I had only one regret about Maungdaw. In 1942 there was a piano in the place, and when our troops withdrew they were forced to leave it behind for the barbarous foe. In December of that same year, when we recaptured Maungdaw, there was the selfsame piano, still intact and devoid of booby-traps. Pinned to it was a note from a Japanese officer, in perfect English, thanking us for the loan of it and saying how greatly he had enjoyed its use. He had only one complaint—there were three notes definitely out of tune, and he therefore requested us to have them repaired for when he returned the following February. Return he did, but not until the following May, and the piano once more changed hands. Alas, I discovered, when we recaptured Maungdaw yet again, that there was no piano to be found. Perhaps both Japanese pianist and English piano are no more.

It was in our Indian troops' Games Room that our West African driver was initiated into the mysteries of the Indian game of *Carrom*. This is played on a square board, fashioned like a billiard table, with pockets at the corners; the object of the game is to 'pot' one's opponents checkers into the pockets before you yourself are similarly liquidated. Our driver was puzzled by the higher strategy employed by a Pathan, who was out to defeat a man from Madras. His comical bewilderment increased, until at last he exclaimed: "You feller white—him feller black, why for you no shootum?" Followed lengthy explanations in basic dumb—and a challenge from the winner. As one West African checker after another vanished off the face of the board and the ranks of the opposition remained unbroken, his merriment increased and, so far as is known, he spent the rest of the day practising for a counter-attack.

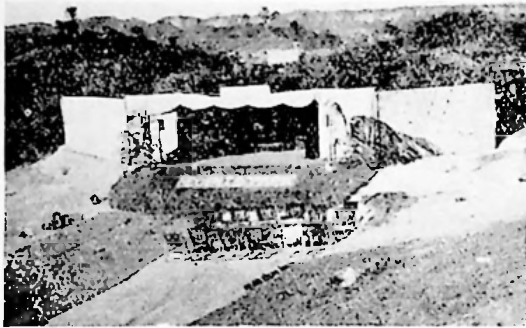
'I.M.F.T.U.'

From Maungdaw I went across the Naaf River to visit Bill Eley and Leslie Duke, who are working in a Malaria Forward Treatment Unit which stands on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. Their house may be built upon sand, but the job they are doing is of solid worth. As in all I.M.F.T.U's the patients are submitted to a drastic form of treatment leaving them with a sensation of weakness and depression that must be overcome if the cure is to go forward. That is why Toc H has been asked to come along.

All day long our men visit the bed patients and perform the acts of helpfulness which in themselves appear small unless set against that background of unvarying monotony.

'Artifex' in Arakan

For the convalescent patients there is a tent set aside for occupational therapy, which in plain English means making things with the hands. Some of the leather work which the men have done at their first attempt is astonishingly good. By now a steady stream of beautifully worked handbags, writing cases and wallets must be on its way to families at home, and many a man will find difficulty in



'Regents Park Theatre.'



Sheridan's Programme 'Basha.'

assuring his wife that the product is entirely his own work and not something out of a shop! Others take to weaving and carving, and it is good to see the way men gobble a hasty breakfast and rush for the tent where the work is done. 'Artifex' has come to Arakan!

Two large hospital tents are made to form one large rest-room and programme-room. Gay curtains, bright carpets and colourful deck chairs have produced something which resembles a Hollywood conception of the tents of Haroun al Raschid. At night debates, sing-songs, whist drives, lectures, etc., are arranged, so that all day long our Toc H men are hard at the job and happy to know that they are winning their private war against depression.

Hyde Park—and Regents Park

Not so far away Terry Sheridan is doing the same thing in another I.M.F.T.U. His speciality is debates on post-war Britain, and many a controversy has become reminiscent of Hyde Park Corner on a Sunday afternoon. Rashly I entered into discussion with a Gunner patient and discovered that he knew more about local government than I did. Serves me right, I suppose, for not finding out beforehand that the fellow was an Alderman in the County of Suffolk before he went to war!

Not only have we Hyde Park there, but also Regents Park. That is the name of a really first-class open-air Theatre. By happy chance it was discovered that the little bowl of hills on which the Toc H *bashas* are built form a natural theatre with extremely good acoustics. There and then the patients and

staff alike combined to build a stage, complete with curtains and dressing-rooms. Talented artists have supplied the *decor*, and a bicycle wheel rings down the curtain most convincingly. Flood-lighting is easy: one has only to drive a couple of jeeps on to the mounds overlooking the arena and the headlights are trained upon the stage. As many as two thousand men can sit in comfort and never miss a word or an action.

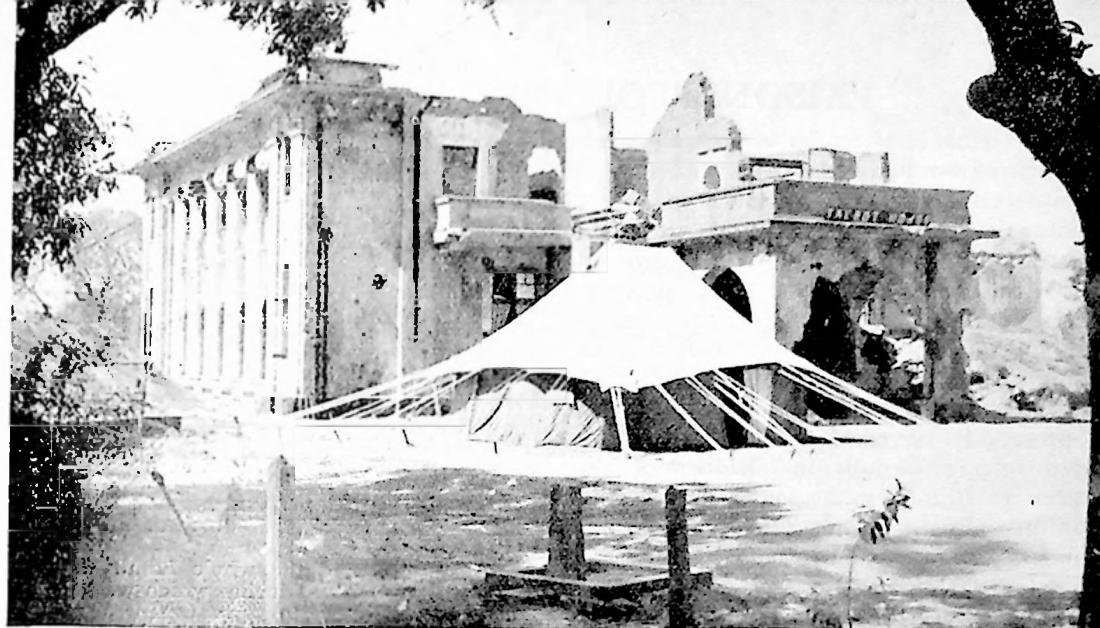
The Theologian

The third I.M.F.T.U. I saw has Taffy Davies as its Toc H host. This unit bore the brunt of the malaria work during the last monsoon, and at the peak time, when even the C.O. was obliged to take on a ward himself, the contribution that Toc H was able to make, they told me, was beyond all praise.

It was whilst I was there that a patient came to Taffy with the request that he be given a series of test sermons to prepare and that afterwards Taffy should mark and criticise them. Lambeth may be relieved to know that Taffy managed to transfer the onus to a Padre some miles away, thereby eliminating the possible introduction of Welsh heresy into Anglican doctrine! Our candidate for ordination was glad to hear that there was a patient studying for the Methodist Church and welcomed a suggestion of combined working.

That night we stood round the little home-made Rushlight for the World Chain of Light, and gave thanks that through our little Toc H Circles and Clubs, such as this one, the belt of darkness in the East is narrowing as our advancing Army takes Toc H with it.

JOHN CALLE.



Talbot House, Akyab.

The Club at Akyab

In the March JOURNAL John Callf told us that Talbot House, Akyab, was opened on February 7. "It was," he said, 'prefabricated' in readiness for entry." Exactly what that means can be seen from the photograph which has since reached us. Stan Weilding, of Barrow Gurney Services Group, who sends it home, writes:

"Toc H was the one bright spot in an otherwise dismal hole, and the blokes there" (*Bill Eley is in charge*) "are doing a good job . . . You can see how it has been knocked about. There isn't a window in the place at all, but it is an oasis in the wilderness. One room has been set aside for a library, and there is a portable gramophone in it as well. The main room contains tables for four, with even cloths on; we had tea and sandwiches."

Toc H Pontefract have received a further description of this Club from a Knottingley man serving in S.E.A.C. He writes:

"When we first took over this place it was just a shambles after the R.A.F. had finished knocking it about, but within twenty-four hours Toc H had set up a place . . . The top part of the house is blown off and half of one side, but still they have made it comfortable, and it's a credit to them. I have been in twice, but the worst part about it is that when you go in you don't want to come out again, as it's so comfortable. I don't know how they manage to get the cakes and stuff out here so fresh and keep the lads going, but you don't have to wait very long to be served. The name of the place is Talbot House"—as can be seen painted over the 'porch.'

Arthur Servante, who, as the March JOURNAL reported, landed at Akyab on his way further with his Mobile Club, wrote afterwards:

"On the day I left Akyab I paid a visit to Talbot House. The whole place presented a remarkable transformation and really looked extremely well. The spacious front lounge, with its now spotless marble floor, was brightly decorated . . . I cannot but feel that Talbot House, Akyab, is going to be the show place on the Arakan front."

Congratulations

TO ARTHUR FREDERICK GIBBS, Sergt. R.A.M.C. (Sydenham Branch) on the award of the British Empire Medal.

In the Dunkirk evacuation he volunteered to stay behind to look after wounded. Later his ambulance convoy was dive-bombed and he was hurt and taken prisoner. In Stalag IX C he was promoted Sergeant, and has now been repatriated. Since his return home he has been to Sweden as

a War Office interpreter. He is studying Japanese for a commission in the Intelligence Corps, for which he has been selected.

TO R. SOWDEN, Cpl., R.A.F. (Secretary of Kirkham R.A.F. Group, District Pilot of North Lancs.) on the award of the B.E.M.

For "work with Allied Forces as Interpreter-Instructor."

PRISONER OF WAR BRANCHES

The tremendous strides of the Allies into Germany from both sides have released many of our prisoners of war and made the whereabouts of many others quite uncertain. Letters from them, written months ago, still arrive at H.Q., while ours can, in many cases, no longer reach them. A letter written in November on behalf of the Guard of the Lamp gave them the best Christmas gift from Toc H it seemed in our power to offer—promotion of each of their gallant and hardworking Groups in prisoner of war camps to Branch status for as long as they continue to exist. Some letters showing how much this is valued by them have reached us. Here is part of one, written on Christmas Day but not received until March 27, from Lieut. Col. Cecil Lister, Chairman of Oflag IX A/H (Village Group), since overrun by the American advance.

"Your letter of November 8 brought us a Christmas gift indeed! As a Group we had just completed our Christmas job of relieving our orderlies of their chores and setting the Dining Room ready for this morning's Holy Communion, when your letter was received. Our first feelings were very naturally of our unworthiness of Branch status, but as we have thought further on the great honour which has been conferred on us, our thoughts are proud ones, and we have rededicated ourselves anew to be worthy members, not only of our new Branch but, we sincerely hope, useful members of some other Branch on our return home . . .

We are having a service of rededication on the occasion of our new status, when our thoughts will be with you all. Our spirits and resolutions have never been higher than at this Christmas, which for so many is the fourth or fifth in captivity . . .

We send you and the whole Family our sincerest wishes for 1945, during which we hope and pray we may return to serve again, as well as take our place as true members of Toc H."

They wish later to give a Lamp in memory of their comrades who died in captivity.

THE ELDER BRETHREN

AITKEN.—In March, CLAUDE CUTHBERT RUBRO AITKEN, aged 69, formerly in Chile, a member of Cockermonth Branch. Elected 1.1.'29.

AMOR.—On January 30, ARTHUR C. AMOR, a member of the General Branch. Elected 29.6.'33.

DEACON.—On March 21, Alderman J. H. DEACON, aged 74, Pilot of Carisbrooke Branch. Elected 7.9.'29.

GREENSLADE.—Reported missing after Dunkirk, lately reported killed in action on May 27, 1940, STANLEY ELON GREENSLADE, Driver, R.A.S.C., a member of Honiton Group. Elected 15.5.'39.

HARDIE.—On March 14, JOHN HARDIE, a founder member and first Pilot of Falkirk Branch. Elected 20.10.'30.

HORWOOD.—Suddenly, on December 12, 1944, HARRY W. HORWOOD, a member of Cradock Branch, Valparaiso, Chile. Elected 3.4.'29.

KEELEY.—On February 15, ROBERT KEELEY, aged 25, former Petty Officer, R.N., a member of Walton Group.

MURCH.—On March 24, JAMES H. MURCH, aged 88, a member and one-time Treasurer of Barnet Branch. Elected 27.3.'26.

MYERS.—Killed in action on February 21, GORDON MYERS, L/Serjt., a member of Ripon Branch. Initiated 12.6.'41.

NICHOLS.—On active service in Holland on December 8, 1944, HARRY E. NICHOLS, Bdr., R.A., aged 30, a member of Heaton Moor Branch. Elected 1.5.'33.

PERRY.—On March 5, FREDERICK JOSEPH PERRY, Vicar of Highwood, a member of Romford Branch. Elected 14.11.'34.

QUINNELL.—In April, after a road accident, WALTER QUINNELL, a member of Keston Branch. Elected 1.1.'43.

ROOKE.—On March 2, PERCY JOHN ROOKE, a member of Gunnislake Group. Elected 14.6.'37.

TURNBULL.—On February 11, the Rev. MATTHEW TURNBULL, a member of Carlisle Branch.

WALLIS.—On March 4, HENRY WALLIS, Engineer Capt., R.N. (ret'd.), aged 85, a member of Ashford Branch. Elected 1.4.'38.

A CAROL OF SERVING MEN

From a visit to Belgium Tubby brought home this Carol, written by Bdr. M. K. JOSEPH, of 662 Squadron, R.A.F. He made it for Christmas, 1944, but it were a pity not to print so beautiful a thing until Christmas, 1945—when the B.L.A., we hope, will no longer be fighting.

*Three wise men came from afar
Through the winter's shining cold,
Bringing to a beckoning star
Frankincense and myrrh and gold.*

"Me and Lofty and Ticker, we got to like them two—
The girl so young for a mother, the bloke, her husband, quite old.
The baby came Christmas night and when we knew
We said: 'What a time to get born, with the war and the bloody cold!'
He was a lovely kid to look at, and we felt, somehow, then
That something *special* had happened, never to happen again."

*Kings from legendary lands,
Drawn by longing beyond sense,
Bearing softly in their hands
Gold and myrrh and frankincense.*

"We made it Christmassy for them, after a fashion—
Gave them a doll for the kiddy, fags for the old man,
Several tins of compo we'd scrounged, and our chocolate ration,
And we wet the baby's head with beer out of a can;
And I thought a lot of my missus and nipper so far away
In England, and how they'd be thinking of me on Christmas Day."

*Sages in forgotten lore
In simplicity concur,
Humbly to their Leige outpour
Gold and frankincense and myrrh.*
M. K. JOSEPH.

IN THE FAMILY

'Adopting' a Hospital

A request made shortly after D-Day by a member in a military hospital to STOCKTON AND THORNABY-ON-TEES BRANCH for a visit led to an unexpected and ambitious job. The visitors found that patients missed homely 'extras' for Sunday tea and began to supply them. As the hospital filled with casualties the job outgrew their resources and they therefore invited some two dozen local firms and societies to join them in an 'adoption' scheme of all the wards, with a central fund. Now each organisation has six visitor's tickets and is supplying not only extras for

tea but toilet requisites, matches, petrol for lighters and, at Christmas, a full stocking for each patient. The military authorities are pleased with the way the work is done and have put it all under the jurisdiction of Toc H. "The men really appreciate the visiting even more than the comforts"—which is as it should be. The Branch has its hands full otherwise, for since June, 1940, it has played host to over 5,000 men on leave with bed and breakfast (without charge) in its own rooms, plus a weekly Services guest-night.

The Old House in Action

Readers of *Tales of Talbot House* know how the Old House in the last war started the fund for training Service men for ordination in the Church of England, a scheme realised in 1919 at the Knutsford Test School, where Tubby, Sawbones and others were teachers. True to tradition, the Old House on Good Friday, 1945, gathered 22 Service Ordination Candidates (from the Royal Navy, R.A., R.E., R.C.S., R.A.S.C., R.E.M.E., and Army Education Corps) for a 'Quiet Day.' On Thursday night the men were received by Charles Young, the Warden, and write gratefully of his welcome and of the quiet, tranquil atmosphere of the building. After a meal at Skindles Hotel they were addressed at Evensong in the Upper Room by Canon Rowbathan (once a Padre on our staff); on Good Friday their devotions were led by the Rev. E. Treacy, S.C.F. "The help derived," writes one of them, "cannot adequately be expressed in words, but we were all given a fresh vision of the Saviour, and His call to utter and complete service."



Members will rejoice to know that Father Stephen—Steve Lambert, former Area Secretary, West Midlands—has gone out on our staff to be Chaplain to the Old House. He is one of Brother Douglas' 'brown brothers,' of the Order of St. Francis (C. of E.), and has been serving for some time as Chaplain of the big Y.M.C.A. Club at Old Westminster Hospital.

Tanker Hospitality

A result of Tubby's visit to the Services Club at Bari (Italy) last August has been the Toc H TANKER HOSPITALITY SERVICE there, which started on October 1 to welcome the personnel of oil tankers and other merchant ships entering the port. A team of men, Toc H members and probationers and Rover Scouts, make personal contact with every ship on arrival and send a 'Bon voyage' message to the captain after departure. Newspapers are put on board every day, and information and airgraph forms supplied, and all the crews are invited to make full use of our Services Club and Hostel. Fifteen ships were thus 'serviced' in the first two months. A note on this reaches us from Capt. Winton Bear, a member of the Bari Circle and of Wellington Branch, N.Z.

The Name of Talbot

The great name of Talbot, famous already in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, continues its succession in Toc H, which was christened after it. There is still a Gilbert Talbot, now fighting in Italy, and his brother John Talbot has been a prisoner of war in Oflag 79, near Brunswick, now overrun by the Allied advance. He wrote a little while ago from the camp:

"I am interested in the Toc H unit, which is getting under way in this camp. It is run by Captain Freddie Green, and Lieut. Judd takes the Probationers' class, which I attend. They seem very interested to have a Talbot in the unit! I gave them a talk on Yugoslavia, also on Reuters."

The explanation of the last sentence is that John Talbot was the first British war correspondent accredited to Marshal Tito; he won his paratroop wings in Yugoslavia. Captured there in May last year, he narrowly escaped execution and was in a Gestapo prison in Vienna for five months.

Another Toc H Prisoner

The Right Rev. G. V. Gerard has just been appointed Vicar of Rotherham. Bishop of Waiapu, New Zealand, and a member of Toc H in Auckland Region, he came to Europe as Senior Chaplain to the New Zealand Forces. He was a prisoner of war in Italy, repatriated in May, 1943, to this country.